

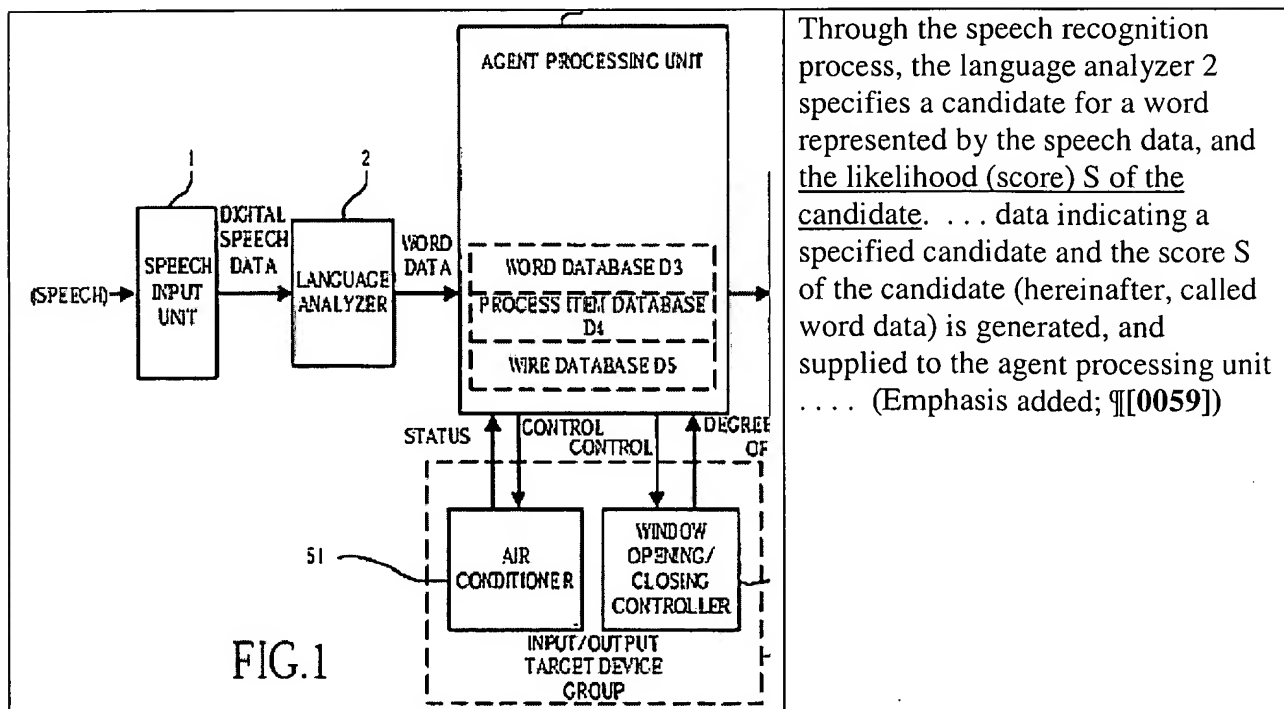
REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

Claims 7, 11, 14-15, 17-18, 23-24, 27-28, and 32 are amended by this response. Claims 1-6, 21-22, 25-26, and 29-31 are canceled, and no claims are added. Accordingly, upon entry of these amendments and remarks, claims 7-20, 23-24, 27-28, and 32-33 will remain pending.

In the latest office action, the Examiner objected to the specification for duplication of the phrase “predetermined data”. The specification has now been amended in the manner indicated above to remove the second instance of this language, overcoming the objection..

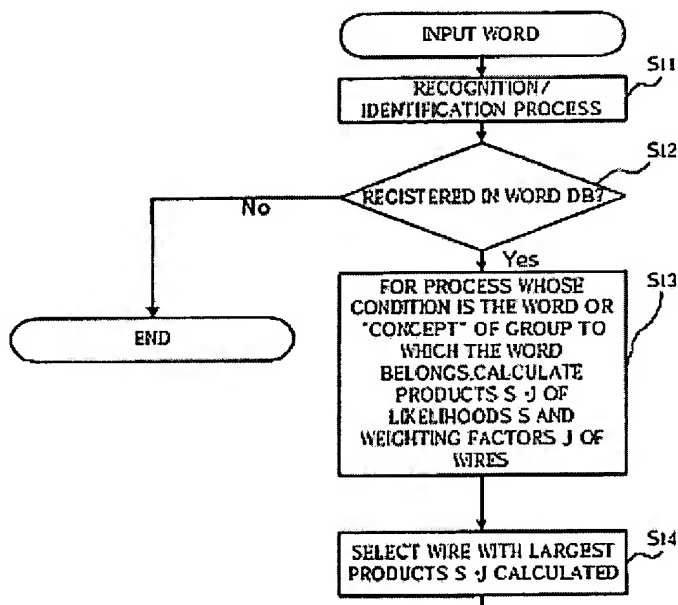
Certain claims are amended by this response to remove specific reference numbers and the term “(score)”. In addition, the Examiner rejected claim 11 as purportedly indefinite. Claim 11 is amended in the manner indicated above in order to overcome this rejection. In particular, claim 11 is amended to recite a further event following transition of a status to one process item. Support for this amendment may be found in the specification as originally filed, at least at ¶[0016]. Accordingly, it is asserted that the indefiniteness rejection has now been overcome.

Turning now to address claim rejections in view of alleged prior art, embodiments of the invention relate to speech recognition. **FIG.1** (reproduced in part below) shows a block diagram of an embodiment of a control device for automobile air conditioning, which relies upon the use of likelihoods (S) in combination with weighting factors (J), for recognition purposes:



According to embodiments of the present invention, speech recognition is accomplished utilizing multiple “processes”. As shown in FIG.1 (above), a plurality of “PROCESS ITEMS” are stored in a database (D4).

As further shown in FIG.11 (reproduced in part below), the likelihood (S) is taken into consideration in transitioning from one “process” to another:



Accordingly, claim 7 recites:

7. A device control device comprising:
- ... process-item data storing means which stores a plurality of process items for executing processes corresponding to recognized information recognized by the input information recognition means; and
 - transition-definition data storing means which stores plural pieces of transition definition data defining transition from one process item in the plurality of process items to another process item, wherein
 - each piece of said transition definition data includes a condition corresponding to input information and a weighting factor corresponding to said condition,
 - said recognized information includes a likelihood indicating a status of matching between said input information and the condition of said transition definition data,
 - said weighing factor is associated with a likelihood corresponding to the condition of said transition definition data to obtain a result of discrimination for the condition of each transition definition data, and
 - a piece of transition definition data is selected based on said discrimination result, and a status is transitioned to a process item designated by the selected transition definition data. (Emphasis added)

Independent claims 23, 27, and 32 recite similar elements.

Certain claims are rejected as obvious in view of U.S. Patent No. 7,143,045 to Sekiguchi ("the Sekiguchi Patent"), taken in combination with U.S. Patent No. 6,980,956 to Takagi et al. ("the Takagi Patent"). Neither reference, however, teaches or even suggests the use of a likelihood in the manner of the claimed embodiments.

In particular, "likelihood" is a term of art in the field of statistics. "Likelihood" is a value that represents "likeliness", whereby when a certain precondition is responsible for occurrence of related events, the precondition can be induced from observation results. In general, when the likelihood is integrated, the integrated value is not 1. Thus, the concept of likelihood differs from that of probability.

With this definition for "likelihood" in mind, neither the Sekiguchi Patent nor the Takagi Patent discloses nor suggests selecting process items based on likelihood. Specifically, the Examiner has cited a comparison based upon similarity in the Sekiguchi Patent, as corresponding to the claimed likelihood. This similarity comparison, however, does not involve a "likelihood" as that term is employed in the instant application. Similarly, the Takagi Patent lacks any discussion of the use of such a likelihood consideration.

Based upon the failure of the references being relied upon by the Examiner to teach or suggest all of the elements of the claims, it is respectfully asserted that the claims cannot be considered obvious in view of those references. Continued maintenance of the rejections is improper, and the rejections should be withdrawn.

Finally, in order to expedite the issuance of claims drawn to allowable subject matter, claims 1-6, 21-22, 25-26, and 29-31 are hereby canceled without prejudice to filing of continuation applications drawn thereto.

In view of the foregoing, Applicants believe all claims now pending in this Application are in condition for allowance. The issuance of a formal Notice of Allowance at an early date is respectfully requested. If the Examiner believes a telephone conference would expedite prosecution of this application, please telephone the undersigned at 650-326-2400.

Respectfully submitted,

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